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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 USNATO 000317

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SUBJECT: NATO-RUSSIA COUNCIL MEETING SHOWS COOPERATION WILL NOT BE EASIER

Classified By: Ambassador Ivo Daalder
for reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The first NATO-Russia Council (NRC) meeting since the June 27 Corfu Foreign Ministerial descended into a bitter exchange on issues across the board including Afghanistan, NATO enlargement, Georgia and Kosovo. The three-hour meeting began constructively, with Russia answering the U.S. and other Allies' call to identify areas for practical political and military cooperation in the NRC. The Russian list included Afghanistan, counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, search and rescue at sea, and counter-piracy. The dynamic shifted quickly, however, after Deputy Secretary of Russia's National Security Council Nazarov answered PermReps questions with belligerent rhetoric, which portrayed NATO as a threat both to Russia and to international stability. Speaking off the cuff he elaborated on his assertions by claiming NATO enlargement takes place without regard to the will of the people in the affected countries, that NATO has armed a regime in Georgia "guilty of multiple acts of genocide," and that ISAF operations are the cause for a deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan. Ambassador Daalder and other Allies pushed back hard on these accusations, with many, including the Chair, making a spirited defense of ISAF activities. While Russian PermRep Rogozin concluded by welcoming the open and frank atmosphere in the meeting, this session has damaged the likely scope and pace of the previously-planned expansion of cooperation in the NRC. End Summary

HERE ARE THE AREAS WHERE WE CAN WORK TOGETHER...

12. (C) Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero opened the meeting by recalling that the June 27 Corfu NRC Foreign Ministerial meeting had restarted military to military cooperation, and hoped there could be progress on common interests. He noted that counternarcotics, one of the key areas of NRC cooperation, face a USD 200,000 shortfall and asked that all members consult capitals to see if additional funding would be forthcoming.

13. (C) Ambassador Daalder observed that Corfu had been successful, if not easy, and reiterated the U.S. position that the NRC should be an all-weather organization and that cooperation should take place in areas where practical

cooperation is possible. Daalder said the United States was willing to explore engagement with Russia on all issues and looked forward to hearing Russian ideas on priority areas for cooperation. He said that such cooperation should be substance driven and must benefit all members of the NRC. Daalder affirmed that the NRC was ready to provide political blessing to military authorities' proposals on how to restart mil-mil cooperation. Finally, Ambassador Daalder also underlined the need to continue the NRC reform effort, to put the NRC on a sounder footing with a more efficient structure.

14. (C) Russian Ambassador Rogozin agreed that work on NRC reform in the run up to the June ministerial in Corfu had been useful, adding that he looked forward to continuing it in September. He indicated that the informal status of the ministerial did not limit future cooperation. He said that Moscow had given the "green light," on mil-mil cooperation, that proposals should be concrete, and that work should start immediately. Rogozin listed the following as areas for possible cooperation, giving the level of detail indicated:

--Afghanistan and counter terrorism: A working group should start working at a practical level.

--Disarmament: A meeting of disarmament specialists from MFAs should meet in Brussels in September.

-- Military technical cooperation: The head of the Russian military technical service could come to Brussels at the end of September. Rogozin said a document between the various

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Russian agencies and NAMSA is nearly complete. In September there could be a discussion, particularly on ISAF and Afghanistani Army needs.

-- Operation Active Endeavor: Russia would like to know more about the assets that Allies are allocating to this operation in order to understand better how to contribute.

-- Counter piracy: Russia was ready for practical cooperation including:

- a) exchange of information via the Russian Deputy Military Attache in London;
- b) A liaison officer with TF-165 and 410 to promote operational unity;
- c) Exchange of information via the Russian Embassy in Bahrain with CJTF 151;
- d) Exchange of liaison officers between NATO, EU and Russian fleets engaged in counterpiracy;
- e) Shared responsibility for convoys of Russian flagged ships (sic); and,
- f) Medical assistance and support in case of force majeure.

-- Theater Missile Defense: Cooperation would be contingent on what the United States decides regarding the third site missile defense decision in Europe.

-- Doctrine: Transparency will be important during the development of NATO's new Strategic Concept. It is important for us (NATO and Russia) to see threats in parallel. Russia does not want to be surprised by an antagonistic document at the end. Russia's willingness to brief NATO on its (completed) National Security Strategy should be matched by NATO willingness to talk to Russia during development of the Strategic Concept.

-- Counternarcotics: Russia was ready to train Pakistani students at Domodedovo training facility, for which additional finances will be required. Russia was also ready to welcome German trainers to Russia.

-- Civil emergency planning: Russia was ready to renew its participation in this activity, bringing higher financing and increased assets.

(Note: the U.S. Military Delegation to NATO has contacted the Russian mission for clarification relating to these ideas. The response has been that the officers are not authorized to discuss the proposals put forward by their Ambassador. End note.)

15. (C) Rogozin additionally portrayed U.S.-Russia cooperation enhancements arising from the Moscow Summit as having benefits for the ISAF operation. He complained that the Bucharest agreement to allow NATO to transit non-lethal material had not yet been put to use. Rogozin also proposed that the NRC hold monthly meetings in the fall to examine NRC effectiveness in each area of cooperation, giving the example of a possible October meeting on ISAF.

16. (C) Allies, including Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Greece, Romania welcomed the prospect for greater cooperation. Germany called for the NRC working groups to restart in order to prepare a Work Plan for 2010. France thought that the 2010 Work Plan could be developed on the basis of an analysis of the work of these committees. The Balts and other cautious Allies on NATO-Russia issues did not engage in this part of the meeting.

... BUT "NATO IS A THREAT"

17. (C) Under the title of "A Briefing and Exchange of Views on Security Strategy Until 2020 of the Russian Federation," which Allies had requested, Deputy Secretary of Russia's National Security Council Vladimir Nazarov gave a lengthy, technical, and sometimes tedious explanation of the

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formulation of Russia's new security document. He spent considerable time addressing aspects of the strategy such as education and economics which have nothing to do with the hard power considerations that are most relevant to NATO. The aim of the Russian briefing appeared to be to indicate to Allies that there was little or nothing for NATO to be concerned about. Where the briefing did address core security themes, Nazarov presented Russia's fundamental security goal as the strengthening of the UN system and international law, in support of international peace and stability. He also added that the goal was "of course, turning Russia into a world power."

18. (C) Problems arose when PermReps asked questions, and Nazarov strayed from his prepared script. Allies' questions included:

- France: What are Russia's security concerns in relation to the rest of the world, including for example, Iran?
- Slovakia: What is Russia's approach to potential hotspots in the North Caucasus?
- Hungary: The Russian strategy paper is critical of NATO. Is that text, like other provisions, open for possible review by Russia?
- Romania: Could energy security be a subject of cooperation?
- Poland: Why is the OSCE missing from Russia's strategy paper when FM Lavrov is claiming that we must strengthen it? What do you mean when you say the precondition for good NATO relations is recognition of justified Russian interests?

19. (C) Nazarov, after asserting that an Iran with both nuclear warheads and delivery systems would be "totally unacceptable" to Russia, turned his attention to the NATO Alliance itself. "NATO for us today is a threat," he said, "and the transformation of NATO brought new threats." Nazarov, speaking in a manner that indicated he thought he was announcing a commonly understood fact asserted that a NATO with global ambitions and an organization that used force without the sanction of the UN Security Council could only be seen as a threat to Russia. He reminded PermReps that it was not Russia that had suspended the NATO-Russia Council and complained that NATO enlargement was bringing the

Alliance closer to Russia's borders. He complained that previous assurances to Russia that NATO military hardware would not get closer to Russia were being broken, citing bases in Eastern Europe and the U.S.-proposed missile defense shield for Europe as examples. Nazarov went on to complain that the prospect of joining NATO was the cause of hostility towards Russian citizens in countries that are candidates for membership in the Alliance. He also complained that this dynamic was leading some candidates to question the true history of how World War II was won. Nazarov said it remained a Russian redline that no group of countries should increase their security at the expense of another country.

¶10. (C) Turning to Afghanistan, Nazarov said that Russia should be active, but that the ISAF presence had made Afghanistan more dangerous by a factor of ten. He said that narcotics production had risen tenfold, leading to increased financing of terrorism and flows of narcotics to Russia. Nazarov said that he did not think military personnel "en-masse" could fight terrorists. He claimed that the average Afghani citizen believed that, for every terrorist killed, ten civilians were killed. Nazarov asserted that Russia knew, on the basis of its experience fighting terrorists in the North Caucasus, that terrorism should be fought by small teams of special forces fighting on the basis of intelligence reports. He said that Russia was willing to develop this kind of cooperation with Allies, particularly with respect to Afghanistan.

¶11. (C) A visibly frustrated Nazarov responded to the energy security question with the analogy of a group of customers complaining about their local supermarket. He said nations would have to create an atmosphere of trust, but that NATO PermReps could not think it was fine for Russia to suffer pressure from countries who systematically refused to pay billions of dollars of bills.

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¶12. (C) Italy, which has in recent months been a major proponent of closer NATO-Russia cooperation, chose to reply first. Italian PermRep Stefano Stefanini said he welcomed the debate, that Italy was among those who most favored restarting NATO-Russia cooperation, but that he completely objected to the notion that NATO could be seen as an adversary of Russia. NATO's 1999 Strategic Concept had clearly rejected that approach, as would the new NATO Strategic Concept currently in development. Stefanini went on to say he could not accept the assertion that NATO and ISAF in Afghanistan were playing a negative role. UK PermRep Eldon followed, saying that an implication that NATO was acting contrary to international law was "preposterous." He noted he did not remember Russia obtaining a mandate for (its war with) Georgia in 2008. Eldon said that finding a causal link between a UN-mandate NATO mission in Afghanistan was also preposterous. He hoped the dialogue with Russia would live up to its potential and that it would not be seen by Russia as a zero sum game. Clearly there was potential for both sides to gain. Eldon closed his intervention by expressing that he was at a loss as to why Russia saw NATO as a threat and by recalling that Article 1 of the Helsinki Final Act stated reaffirmed the right of states to be a party to treaties of alliance.

¶13. (C) NRC Chairman Deputy Secretary General Claudio Bisogniero then attempted to close the meeting with the observation that it had been an open and frank exchange. However, Nazarov cut him off, insisting that he be allowed speak again. Nazarov said Russia's national security strategy paper had not actually called NATO a threat, but regardless Russia was witnessing a creeping of military forces up to its borders by an organization that uses military force in contravention of the findings of the UN Security Council. He claimed not to have said that NATO had caused a tenfold increase in narcotics production in Afghanistan, or that NATO's presence there was a negative factor but asserted that

it was clear that the increase had taken place during this time. Nazarov said that Russia had always been committed to the territorial integrity of Georgia (Note: This left many wondering if there had been a translation error. End note). Nazarov said that, despite this Russian commitment, the leadership of Georgia had committed numerous acts of genocide. He asked PermReps why they were arming the Saakashvili regime. Nazarov said that the Georgian invasion of South Ossetia had followed immediately after consultations with former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He went on to ask who was responsible for Iraq, and who had actually seen WMD in Iraq. Nazarov then asked why nobody asked Ukraine what it wanted in regard to NATO membership, citing 70 percent public opposition as evidence that Ukraine had no free will in the matter. He said he knew that Russia could not veto NATO enlargement, but said that this did not equate to an obligation to keep silent on the matter.

¶14. (C) Ambassador Daalder said he regretted to have to prolong the encounter but the turn of events left him no choice. He shared the Italian and UK concerns, highlighting Nazarov's references to Georgia as an example of where Russia itself had violated territorial integrity and where international law and the international system had universally disagreed with the Russian stance. Ambassador Daalder said that it was obvious there would be disagreements with Russia but that cooperation on Afghanistan would be in everyone's interests. He took particular exception to Nazarov's characterization of NATO's impact on Afghanistan, reminding the Russian that the NAC met every week and reviewed which nations had given lives for this cause. Daalder reiterated that the NRC should be an all-weather forum, but indicated that this conversation had not made cooperation any easier.

¶15. (C) Russian Ambassador Rogozin professed satisfaction that the NRC was being used for "honest" discussion. He assured all present that Russia would like to see a NATO victory in Afghanistan and expressed surprise at Allies'

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annoyance with Nazarov, who had "not accused NATO of planting poppies." Rogozin suggested that NATO negotiate with the CSTO on future counternarcotics initiatives and maintained that Serbia had the same territorial integrity problem as Georgia.

¶16. (C) German PermRep Brandenburg made a feeble attempt to claim that the difference of opinion between Russia and NATO came from a "lost year" when the NRC did not meet. He claimed this showed the need for NRC working groups to sit down together.

¶17. (C) A clearly irate Bisogniero summed up by saying that all should save the constructive elements of the way forward from the June 27 Corfu ministerial meeting. He reminded all that NATO was in Afghanistan on behalf of the international community, and under the cover of a UN Security Council Resolution. The Chairman recalled that casualties that fall in Afghanistan fall for NATO and for the whole international community, adding that all must respect them dearly for that.

¶18. (C) Comment: This meeting began as an engine to drive more useful NRC cooperation. On a technical level it succeeded, and NATO and Russia still appear committed to dealing with each other in areas where both see a benefit to the interaction. The Russian tirade against NATO in the second half of the meeting was a real-life reminder to PermReps that a happy and productive relationship with Russia cannot be engineered by hope. Some Allies may soldier on with calls for across the board bureaucratic restart of the NRC, but they will look increasingly blind to context. In consultation with Washington, USNATO will continue to push forward the NRC reform effort. We will also continue to negotiate for a NATO-Russia relationship that works on an effective and reciprocal basis, in areas of common concern, and where NATO stands to gain something from the endeavor.

End Comment.
DAALDER